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Ayer
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INDIANAPOLIS, Feb. 7. 1913.

Edward Everett Ayer Esq.

Dear Sir -

For several years the historical Societies of this region have been trying to get a special appropriation to the Bureau of Ethnology for work on the Indian languages of the Central West, but thus far without success. The nature of the effort will appear more fully from the inclosed resolutions of the Indiana Historical Society on this subject.

I am now trying to organize a Society for the Preservation of Indian Languages; and, while at Washington last week, Father Hughes, of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, suggested that I write to you about it. I think it possible that one of your interest in Americana may be interested to know that the first publication desired to be undertaken is a translation of a Peoria-French dictionary and texts, prepared by a French missionary in Illinois (probably Le Boulanger) some two centuries ago. I inclose a sample photostat copy of a page of it for your inspection, which kindly return to me when you are through with it.

The Peoria, as you probably know, was a dialect of the Miami, which was the chief language of Indiana and Illinois. It is not now in use, and to make the mss. available it must be translated into modern Miami and English. I have made two trips to Oklahoma

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for the Bureau of Ethnology, and have demonstrated that this can be done, but there are only two Indians living, that I have found, who are competent to translate it, and both are advanced in years. If they should die before the work is done, the mss. will be practically a dead letter.

The only difficulty in the way is financing the Society at the start. I think the publications would take care of it after the issue of the first two numbers, which should be based on this mss. — one of the dictionary proper, and one of the texts, which cover the book of Genesis, most of the Catholic mass, catechisms, prayers, hymns etc. This would probably cost $10.000, as the only way to get the translation is for someone to go to Oklahoma and live with the Indians till the work is done.

A number of prominent people feel an interest in the work. Gov. Marshall has agreed to act as one of the vice presidents of the Society if it is organized; and Mr. Hodge, in charge of the Bureau of Ethnology, Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association, Benj. Smallwood, Secretary of the American Peace Association, Judge Howe, President of the Indiana Historical Society, and others, are willing to serve as directors. If I could find some reputable gentleman who would endow the Society with a working capital of $10.000 I could make him president of a

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learned society known throughout the civilized world", for there is as much or more attention paid to Indian languages in Europe as in this country. I take the liberty of mailing to you, under separate cover, a little book of mine — "True Indian Stories" — in the introductory chapter of which you will find further discussion of this subject; and pray accept this with my compliments. If the matter should interest you I would be glad to correspond further in regard to it. If not, I hope I have not wearied you with this presentation of it.

Very Truly Yours

J. P. Dunn

104 State House - Indianapolis -